



Forestry Assistance Program

FY 2005
Final Report
Environmental Stewardship Division



"Wood is a crop. Forestry is Tree Farming."
— *Gifford Pinchot*

Introduction

This is the second year of the Forestry Assistance Program (FAP), a granted program from Michigan Department of Agriculture to the Conservation Districts (CD) using funds from Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This program covers 46 counties with 20 grants and 18 Full Time Equivalents around the state to assist private landowners with forestry questions. The counties that are covered were selected by a Request for Proposal in a grant process. County areas that demonstrated the greatest need for a forester and showed the ability to carry out the job were granted positions for their area. This was a very difficult job as all counties in the state need forestry assistance.

The purpose of the Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) is to assist Conservation Districts in their efforts to help Michigan's citizens better understand, plan, manage, protect, and utilize their forest resources. Forest health issues include, but are not limited to, Emerald Ash Borer, Oak Wilt, and Beech Bark Disease.

The numbers that follow will picture what the foresters got done in FY 2005. These numbers reflect hard work from dedicated people that believe what they are doing is worth while and makes a difference in people's lives and the natural resources of the state. As some of the programs grow and the word is spread more private landowners will turn to the advice of these foresters.

Before you read the numbers here are some success stories about the program and what it does to help private forest owners. There are many stories, these are just a few.

Osceola County

An Osceola County landowner was approached by a timber buyer regarding his 8 acre hard maple forest. The buyer marked and made an offer on the purchase of 80 trees and was willing to pay \$20,200. After consulting with the Conservation District Forester the landowner, with the assistance of a private forester, proceeded to remark the woodlot. The eventual harvest resulted in the removal of 50 trees, including the tops, and brought the landowner \$21,600.

Gogebic County

A CD Forester met with a landowner near Wakefield in Gogebic County earlier this fall on 80 acres. He got the CD Forester's business card from a landowner the forester had seen the summer before and was interested in having a timber sale done. The property consisted primarily of unmanaged northern hardwoods (sugar maple, yellow birch, hemlock, red maple, etc...) and has been in the family several generations. The landowner had a local logger out before the CD Forester got there who pointed out which trees he would cut and which ones he would leave. Basically the logger pointed out all the quality trees (straight, big, tall and healthy) as the ones he would cut and all the small, defective, crooked trees as the ones he would leave. The prices he gave were as follows: 10% of mill price on pulpwood (mills are paying \$80-\$100/cord) which amounts to \$10/cord max; on saw logs and veneer he was willing to pay 40% of mill price. The going rates for pulpwood is from \$15 to \$30/cord (stumpage) and, if done on a percent basis by an independent logger, log prices are often

50% of mill price and veneer prices are 60%-70% of mill price. If a mill contracts for the cutting, landowners often get log prices close to what the mill pays independent loggers. So basically the logger wanted to high grade the woods thus decreasing long term production, value, health, and quality and then low ball the prices. The landowner asked the CD Forester for recommendations and he was told "do the opposite"!! Cut the worst trees and leave the best!! Following the CD Forester's recommendations the landowner will have a woods that will be producing a high proportion of quality trees after several 15 year cutting cycles. The CD Forester also told him what he should be getting for stumpage. He was given a list of reputable consultants and is now signed up for a stewardship plan and timber sale through one of the consultants. He should end up with a good plan, better income from the timber sale, and a better quality forest when everything is done. This is the essence of the Forestry Assistance Program - to help landowners manage for the long term.

Grand Traverse County

The CD Forester in the Grand Traverse office was given the chance to meet a landowner on site after a prospective timber buyer had marked some trees for potential harvest. With the threat of Emerald Ash Borer devastating ash trees in our area the prospective buyer told the landowner he would mark the mature ash trees to get some value out of them before regulations and quarantines made it fairly difficult to remove them. Unfortunately, once on-site the CD Forester only counted 3 ash trees marked and around 90 sugar maple trees marked for harvest. With maple prices as high as they are it obviously pays more for a logger to take them to the mill than an ash log would but then the threat of Emerald Ash Borer should not be a reason to mark the trees that were marked. Also in this particular woodlot the merchantable tree density was at about half of what it should be before someone should think of harvesting. In this case the landowner did not sign a contract and took the advice of a CD Forester to wait 5 -10 years before a select harvest was considered.

Wexford County

In Wexford County a private landowner contacted the CD Forester for an opinion on his marketable maple trees before he sold. He knew of the CD Forester's services from buying tree seedlings from the Conservation District. The timber buyer "offered" \$38,000.00 for 300+ trees. After the CD Forester's assessment and advice to him he advertises for bids, the first "bidder" doubled his offer knowing he was bidding against other bidders. That offer was still low and the successful bid was \$117,000.00! The difference was the contact with the CD Forester and services provided.

Gladwin County

Gladwin County Township had 160 acres and wanted some idea what their timber might be worth. They were in a pinch for some money as many townships are around the state. The CD Forester met with them at a township board meeting after walking the property. As the CD Forester sat and listened, every subject was difficult because it was on spending with a very tight budget. So when I helped them understand the worth of their timber and how management could sustain that income over years they were all smiles. It is nice to be the one who delivers good news.

Marquette County

In August 2005, a series of thunderstorm downbursts severely damaged thousands of acres of forest in western Marquette County. Among the areas impacted was the Ford Eagle Preserve, now owned by the Central Lake Superior

Land Conservancy. The Preserve has long been a nesting site for bald eagles and is vegetated with large, high-value, northern hardwoods. The Conservancy board was debating whether to salvage the blown down timber to help fund the organization, or to let nature take its course and allow the debris to enrich the soil and diversify wildlife habitats.

The Alger-Marquette Conservation District Forester was known to the Conservancy because of the workshop he had conducted the previous year on how to incorporate working forest provisions into conservation easements. Accordingly, the CD Forester was approached by the Conservancy about conducting a salvage timber harvest on the Preserve. After conducting a reconnaissance of the Preserve with one of the Conservancy board members and reviewing the scientific literature on blow down ecology, the CD Forester gave a PowerPoint presentation to the entire board on the relevant ecological and logistical considerations. He recommended that a consulting Forester be retained to conduct a partial salvage that would capture most of the timber value while retaining enough slash to protect the soil and discourage browsing of regenerating trees by deer.

Not all timber buyers take unfair advantage of landowners; in fact there are only a few who give all the rest a bad name. Never the less, this makes CD Foresters positions extremely valuable to landowners. What if the CD Forester were not available to help these people? How would these stories be told? Many landowners end up turning to the CD Forester too late and the trees are gone. How many landowners don't call a CD Forester and are taken advantage of by these unfair timber buyers or loggers? The landowners that this happens to are left with only a fraction of the value of the timber and forest property that takes many more years to return to production. So hopefully the number of "happy endings" will increase as the CD Foresters continue to make contacts with landowners and give the helpful advice needed to properly manage woodlands.



Forestry Assistance Program Deliverables

A. Landowner Contacts

Conservation District Foresters spent much of their time answering questions from landowners. The Foresters had 10,260 phone calls or walk-ins from landowners about forestry.

Forest Health

Forest Health continues to be a concern with landowners. About 80 percent of walk-ins and phone contacts with landowners were about forest health issues, including curling leaves, leaf spots, insects, and dying trees. With the spread of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), Oak wilt, and Beech Bark diseases these calls will continue. Many of these landowner contacts end up with site visits.

Plan writing

Plan writing is usually handled by referring the client to the private sector. This is done by providing the client with a list of consulting Foresters in the area; several districts make the contact with the consultant for the landowner. More plans were written this year by CD Foresters as consultants would rather have the CD Forester just refer the harvest to them. These plans will range with Forest Stewardship Plans, Tree Farm Plans, Conservation Plans, Forest Land Enhancement Plans (FLEP), Resource plans, and tree planting plans.

Harvest Recommendations

Many contacts with CD Foresters end up in referrals for harvesting of forest products. These are referred out to the private industry and often the landowner returns to the Forester to ask if the harvest is being done properly.

Wildlife

Many inquiries of CD Foresters are how to attract wildlife to the property. This is followed up by education of forest landowners that often leads to forest harvests. Many landowners believe that leaving the forest alone is the best way to attract wildlife.

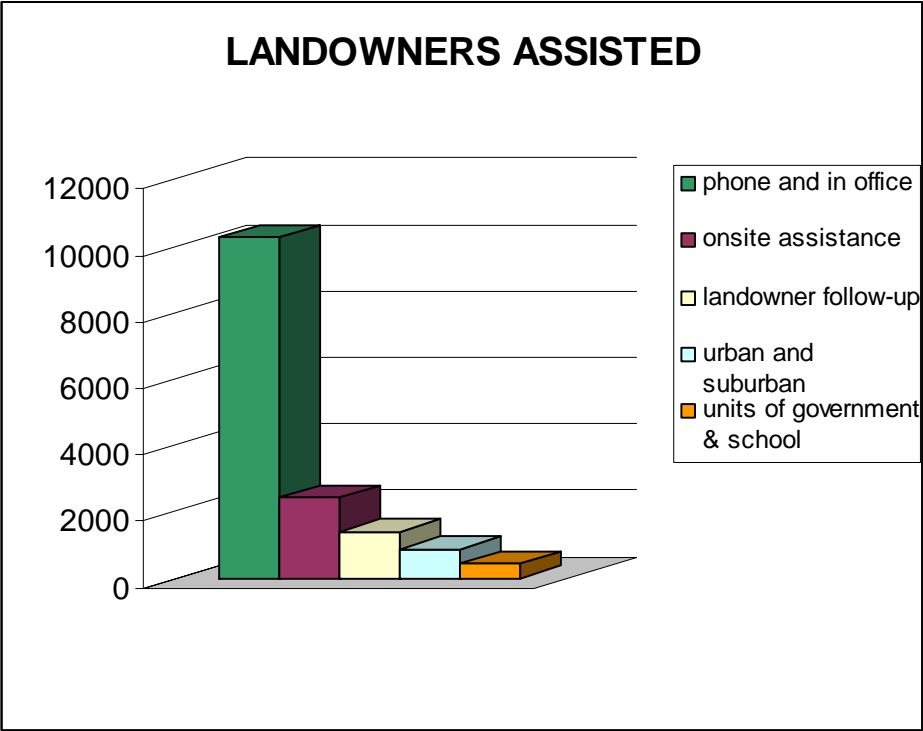
Landowners Location

Not only are landowners in the district helped where their land is located, but many landowners in these districts live outside of the area. These lands are held for hunting and recreational properties by persons living in urban and suburban areas of the state.

On-site Visits

Many of the landowners that called in or visited the offices ended up with an on-site visit; 24 percent or 2,450. The acres that Foresters worked on during these on-site visits totaled 95,844 acres. On-site visit discussions covered landowners' options such as cost-share programs (FLEP, WHIP, EQIP), tree planting recommendations,

should there be a timber sale, and how to keep the wildlife around or out. Of these 2,450 on-site visits, 40 percent were urban and suburban visits helping with individual trees on city lots or in subdivisions. CD Foresters had 353 programs that targeted the urban and suburban landowners.

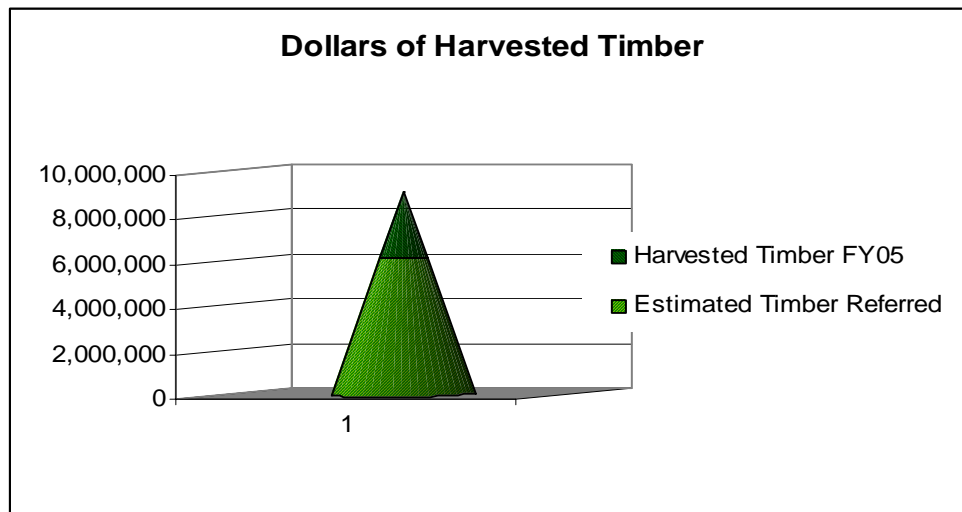
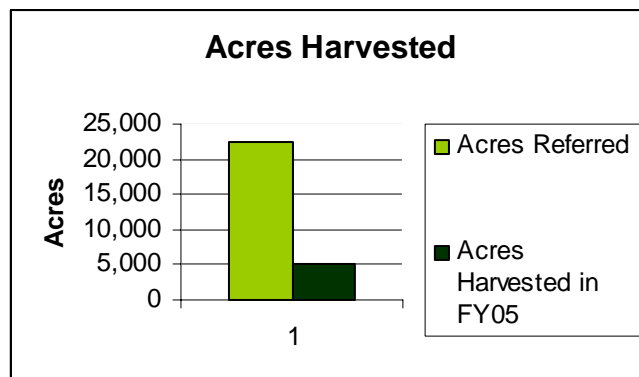


B. Harvests

CD Foresters made 711 harvest referrals during the year. These went to private industry for timber sale. Acres referred for harvest during this period totaled 22,394 acres. These were acres that were a direct result of contact with a CD Forester. The estimated value of the timber referred for harvest was \$6.05 million.



Not all acres were harvested during FY04. Actual acres harvested during FY04 as a result of CD Forester referrals totaled 5,042 acres. The value of the timber harvested as a result of the referrals was \$2.9 million.



C. Programs Presented and Meetings

Many types of programs were presented to the public on forestry topics. Many were on forest health that included EAB. Oak Wilt questions are becoming more predominant as it spreads across the state, while the west side of the state has a spreading problem with Beech Bark disease. Programs were presented to State Park residents on the hazards of moving firewood and the monitoring of movement of EAB. Programs were held at field days, tours, county fairs, home shows, wildlife expos, lake associations, schools, wildlife groups, community groups, as well as presentations to township and county officials. Foresters presented at 324 meetings where 17,393 people attended.



Along with the public meetings, the CD Foresters also met with public and private Foresters. They had 349 meetings with these professionals in there areas.

CD Foresters worked on getting information out to the public by using the news media. Foresters have been on the radio, television, and in newspapers explaining what they do and why. They also write articles for newspapers on forest health and current forest problems in the area. During Fiscal Year 2004 the CD Foresters wrote 197 such articles.



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Certified tree conservationists

By AMANDA CAIRO
News Staff Writer

While the tree farm program is not new, the sign hanging next to Lincoln farmers Larry and Kathy Duby's certified tree farm sign is.

The Dubys were recently recognized as a certified tree farm and also given a conservation district cooperative sign that notes farmers who use significant forest management practices. The sign presented to the Dubys is one of the first in the state to be distributed.

"It's amazing how much help you can find if you look around," Larry Duby said.

In a cooperative effort with the tree farm program, conservation districts are trying to recognize farms that do forestry work, both using conservation district resources and the tree program.

"We're trying to keep the signs together," said Rick Myrick, conservation district forester.

The Dubys moved to Lincoln after retiring a couple of years ago, bought a farm and started working on the 185 acres when they realized they needed help. They

the couple again found themselves needing help, this time across the hall from the extension office at the conserva-

Tree farms, see page 2A



News Photo by Amanda Cairo

Delay

Weather delays landing; NASA vows to land shuttle today

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Low clouds kept shuttle Discovery and its crew of seven from making their much-anticipated return to Earth, and NASA vowed to bring the spacecraft down Tuesday in Florida, California or possibly even New Mexico.

"We will attempt to land somewhere," flight director LeRoy Cain said after Monday morning's two unsuccessful landing opportunities.

The delay disappointed the astronauts' families, who were waiting at Kennedy Space Center.

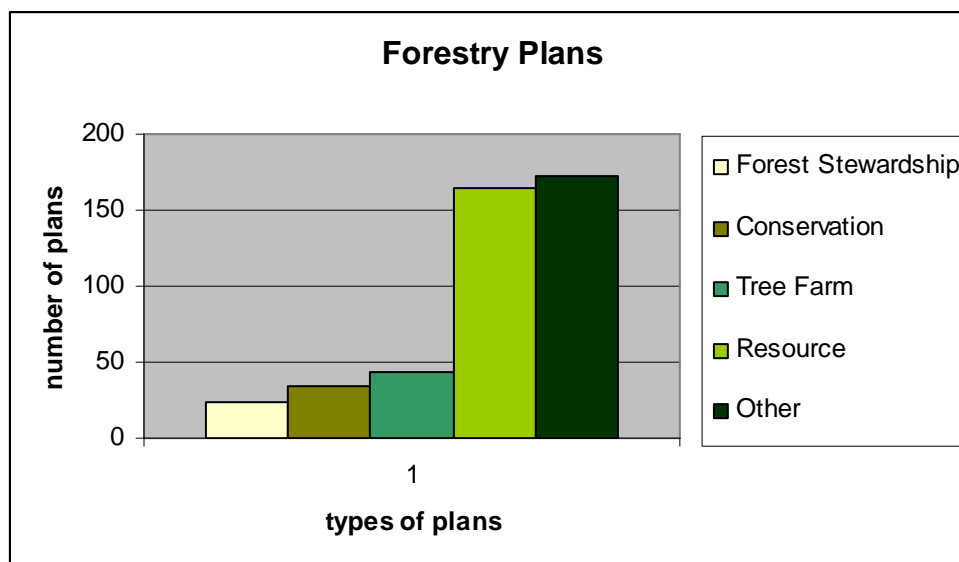
TODAY'S LANDING

First attempt: 5:07 a.m. at Kennedy Space Center

Other attempts could force the shuttle to land at: Edwards Air Force Base in California's

D. Plans Written

CD Foresters were busy writing plans and referring persons to the private sector to have plans written. The main type of plans fell under the “Other” category; these were correspondence for plan instructing the landowners. Also contained in “Other” are plans for landowners that did not want to participate in government programs. A resource plan is written just for a specific use on the land such as tree planting. Foresters also wrote Forest Stewardship Plans, although the numbers of these plans are on the decline because of the paper work that is involved in the program. Foresters also assisted with writing and reviewing Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) plans, and Tree Farm plans. Many plans had to take into account the EAB problem in southeast Michigan, as well as address EAB concerns out of the core area.



Types of Plans	Number	Acres Covered
Forest Stewardship Plans	24	2,524
Conservation Plans	34	1,453
Tree Farmer Plans	44	2,303
Resource Plans	164	7,527
Other	172	6,194
Total Plans and Acres	394	20,001

E. Referrals

As part of the job, CD Foresters refer landowners to the private and public sector for many reasons. The main reason to refer landowners to the private sector is not to infringe on private sector jobs. The private sector will handle all timber sales; marking timber, wildlife plantings, lining up timber sales, and writing some of the plans. Landowners would be referred to the public sector for things like cost-share applications, permits for wetland or soil erosion, persons interested in the Commercial Forest Act (CFA), and some disease identification. These public referrals would include agencies like Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan State University

Extension, United States Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and in some cases the Forest Service. In all, the CD Foresters referred 882 landowners to the private sector and 635 landowners to the public sector.

Types of referrals	Landowners	Acres
Public referrals	635	10,724
Private referrals	882	29,895

F. Reforestation

As part of the Conservation District programs, they offer trees for reforestation and conservation planting. CD Foresters were able to assist landowners in making wise choices on types of trees to plant based on plans or soil type for the landowner. Many trees are sold to absentee landowners that own property away from where they live for recreation, hunting, or a second home. Trees that were planted with assistance of the CD Forester covered about 5,854 acres.



G. Cost-Share Assisted

Conservation District Foresters assisted landowners getting into cost-share programs. These were federally funded programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) (tree planting portion), Wildlife Incentive Program (WHIP), and Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Several state funded programs were available for landowner's as well: Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), and Forest Stewardship Program. Some districts offer local cost-share programs. CD Foresters helped 137 landowners get into cost-share programs on 6,343 acres.

H. Continuing Education

Foresters also kept up with current forest related issues by attending education classes, Forest Stewardship Plan Writing classes, Forest Land Enhancement Program

classes, Society of American Foresters courses, Tree Farm training, forest habitat training, Oak Wilt training, and Emerald Ash Borer tree trap training. In total, 140 continuing education classes were attended. These classes enabled the Foresters to better explain different programs that forest landowners could participate in or forest health problems that are being encountered in the state.

I. Emerald Ash Borer

Conservation District Foresters were also asked to help with the Emerald Ash Borer survey that was done throughout the state. 18 Foresters, or their agents, worked in 37 counties and set 2,018 traps. These set traps were rechecked after about 6 weeks for EAB infestation. This took about 1 month away from their normal tasks of helping the public directly, but it did help the public better understand the EAB problem. The publicity that went out prior to setting tree traps generated many more calls to the CD Foresters and raised an awareness of the problem in the state. One of the sites outside the quarantine area was brought to the Conservation District Forester just because the wood cutter was aware of the program and what to look for and where to bring an infested tree.

